

McComish, Waters form strong force for Ahwatukee

by [Lisa Halverstadt](#) - Dec. 3, 2008 08:36 AM
 The Arizona Republic

For the first time, Ahwatukee is poised to have two of its own at the Statehouse.

Republican Rep. John McComish was re-elected to his position in the House and will be joined by Democrat Rae Waters.

And when the next legislative session begins in January, the two won't need to waste any time getting acquainted. They've known one another for years.

"(McComish) knows how long we've known each other by how old my daughter is," Waters said.

She's 17.

The two met when McComish, then owner of the Little Professor Book Store at 48th Street and Elliot Road, approached a pregnant Waters, then president of the Ahwatukee Parenting Group, about sponsoring a book fair to raise money for local schools.

Though McComish closed his store in 1996 and became chair of the Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce, they ran into each other often over the next 17 years.

Waters' two children attended Kyrene de las Lomas Elementary School, where McComish's wife, Karen teaches second grade.

When McComish first considered running for the Legislature, Waters urged him to do so. Though he wasn't successful in his 2002 bid, McComish ran again in 2004.

The race was close, with McComish beating challenger Anton Orlich by 13 votes in a recount. McComish became the second Ahwatukee resident to serve in the state Legislature. Former Rep. Henry Evans, who served from 1983 to 1993, moved to Ahwatukee from Tolleson in 1987 before his district, which included that city, much of the West Valley, Laveen and Ahwatukee, was split.

This year, McComish was named House majority leader. He previously served as majority whip.

Waters, who has served on the Kyrene school board for more than 10 years and has been an outspoken education advocate, decided to run for the Legislature after years of encouraging others to do so.

She beat Republican challenger Jeff Dial of Chandler by 675 votes.

Waters and McComish already have met to discuss future partnerships, which could

Advertisement

GET A FREE GIFT CARD

TO USE FOR GAS OR GROCERIES!



Get the best available rate on your *Arizona Republic* subscription. Change to EasyPay's monthly payment program. Take control of your bills, save money and get a free \$10 Safeway gift card!

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

CALL 888-303-8949 OR VISIT EPG.AZCENTRAL.COM TO SIGN UP!



PROMO CODE: EPG

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

include joint town halls they said.

Though they don't share a party affiliation, McComish and Waters said they are both strong supporters of education and both oppose the planned alignment of Loop 202 through a portion of Ahwatukee.

The veteran and first-time lawmaker will serve Ahwatukee well because they know the area intimately and are both established community leaders, Phoenix District 6 Councilman Greg Stanton said.

"John McComish gets along with everybody and works with everybody," Stanton said. "Rae is the same way. She's there to get things done."

Doug Cole, chairman of the Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee, said he hopes the duo can help cut through bureaucratic red tape as Phoenix attempts to purchase the South Mountain 620 land.

Laura Rivers, president of the Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce, hopes to invite the two to participate in public-policy meetings at the chamber and looks forward to hearing their insights.

Evans, who moved to the Biltmore area after retiring from the Legislature in 1993, said McComish and Waters can accomplish a lot for District 20 if they work together.

"I think they will probably get some things done," Evans said.

McComish's new position will be good for constituents, too, he said.

"He can swing some real weight (in the Legislature) for Ahwatukee," Evans said.

Advertisement

GET A FREE GIFT CARD

TO USE FOR GAS OR GROCERIES!



Get the best available rate on your *Arizona Republic* subscription. Change to EasyPay's monthly payment program. Take control of your bills, save money and get a free \$10 Safeway gift card!

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

CALL 888-303-8949 OR VISIT EPG.AZCENTRAL.COM TO SIGN UP!



EASYPAY
Easy to do. Easy to save.
Change the way you pay.

PROMO CODE: **EPG**

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™